REMARKS

Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Kokubu et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,144,033. Claim 15 is also rejected as being anticipated by the patent to Tanaka, Japanese Publication No. 2003-200721. Claims 2-6 are rejected as being obvious in view of the patent to Kokubu and the Japanese publication to Tomosada, Japanese Publication No. 2003-221021. Claims 7-11 are rejected as being obvious in view of Kokubu, Tomosada, and the patent to Tanaka. Finally, claims 16-18 are rejected as being obvious in view of the patents to Tanaka and Lundell, U.S. Patent No. 5,264, 066.

Prior to discussing the merits of the Office Action, the Applicants believe that a review of the invention is warranted. As discussed in the Background Art of the present application, the labels applied to finished tires are typically pre-printed and, as such, if changes are made to the tire construction during manufacture, the pre-printed labels are likely rendered obsolete and must be scrapped. This results in a significant cost to the tire manufacturer. Additionally, test data is sometimes applied to the tire label and if test criteria change, then those labels with pre-printed criteria can no longer be used and must be scrapped.

To overcome this problem the Applicants have developed a labeling system with an applicator which prints the appropriate information on the tire label only as it is needed. The applicator is configured to receive the appropriate tire information and also the position of the tire in relation to a stack of tires. The applicator then takes the printed label and moves within three axes of rotation and also in a rotational position so as to remove the label from the printer and move the label to the surface adjacent the tire where the label is to be applied. Using a vacuum system mounted in the head of the applicator, the label is held in place after it is pulled off of the web-backing material upon which the label was printed, and then applies the adhesive-facing side of the label to the appropriate tire surface. This configuration is advantageous in that labels are printed only as needed and that the labels can be printed with the appropriate information as needed. Additionally, the configuration is advantageous in that the tires can be stacked and still labeled with the appropriate information so as to enhance the overall tire manufacturing process.

Upon consideration of the invention and the references cited, Applicants respectfully request entry of amendments to independent claims 1 and 15 and their respective dependent claims.

In regard to claim 1, it now sets forth that the system is for positioning a label on a surface of a specific tire, wherein the specific tire is maintained within a stack of tires. The system comprises a computer adapted to receive tire information regarding a specific tire and a printer receiving the tire information and position information for the specific tire from the computer and printing the tire information on the label. A single applicator is configured to receive the label for placement on the specific tire. And the claim now concludes with the limitation regarding an arm carried by one of the guides wherein the arm is rotatable with respect to one of the axes and wherein the rotatable arm has a rotatable head. The computer instructs the rotatable arm to move along the first, second and third axes so as to pick up a label from the printer with the rotatable head and then moves the rotatable arm along the axes so as to apply the label to the surface of a specific tire.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Kokobu nor Tomosada and/or Tanaka, either singly or in combination, teach or suggest the features as now set forth in independent claim 1. Kokobu only teaches application of a mark. No teaching or suggestion is provided that the mark is applied to a specific tire within a stack of tires. Nor is there any teaching or suggestion that a label is printed for a specific tire and then moved through three axes of motion to then attach the label to the tire in a stack of tires. Moreover, neither Kokobu nor any of the other cited reference either singly or in combination teach or suggest moving a label after it is picked up from a printer in three different axes wherein one of the axes has a rotatable arm so as to complete application of the tire label. Although the reference to Tomosada shows an arm that applies a label, it is rotatable only in a singular axis and is not movable through three different axes. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 as amended is allowable over the art made of record. And with it being the position of the Applicants that claim 1 is allowable, all claims depending therefrom are likewise deemed allowable.

Claim 15 has been amended in a manner similar to the independent apparatus claim and it now specifically sets forth a method for applying printed labels to a surface of a specific tire wherein the specific tire is maintained within a stack of tires. The claim also now sets forth that the tire information is supplied regarding the tire to a computer along with position information of where the specific tire is within the stack of tires. The claim also now sets forth that the applicator has a rotatable arm which is used to remove the label from the printer and wherein the applicator is moved in a first axis, a second axis,

and a third axis so as to position the applicator near the specific tire and then moving the rotatable arm so as to apply the label to the tire.

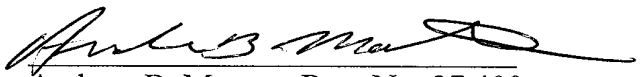
As noted in the discussion regarding claim 1, none of the references made of record teach or suggest moving the applicator through three different axes of motion and then also including a rotatable arm associated with one of the axes of motion so as to apply a label to a tire surface. Accordingly, with it being the position of the Applicants that claim 15 is allowable, all claims depending therefrom are likewise deemed allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and arguments presented herein, the Applicants believe that they have properly set forth the invention and accordingly, respectfully request the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections provided in the last Office Action. A formal Notice of Allowance of claims 1-7, 9, and 15-17, is earnestly solicited.

In the event that a fee required for the filing of this document is missing or insufficient, the undersigned Attorney hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge payment of any fees associated with this communication or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. **18-0987**. If a withdrawal is required from Deposit Account No. 18-0987, the undersigned Attorney respectfully requests that the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks cite Attorney Docket Number **CTA.P0003** for billing purposes.

Should the Examiner deem a telephone call to be beneficial in resolving any remaining matters, or to place the claims in better form for allowance, the same would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



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